Identity in Cultural Appropriation

Native American Representations in Euro-American Art

By

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Honors Thesis

Appalachian State University

Submitted to the Department of Art

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

December, 2019

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Abstract

The inspiration for this paper came from a class where the students were given an opportunity to create a project based off of *Circus Americanus* by Ralph Rugoff. This book compiled multiple case studies relating to the field of visual culture. The one study that drew my specific attention, analyzed the city of Las Vegas, Nevada in relation to its appropriation of cultures for entertainment purposes. From this, I developed a project that approached the topic of Native American sports mascots leading me to breach the massive conversation that revolves around cultural appropriation issues and matters of representations of Indigenous cultures. I came to understand how extensive this field of study is and the many ways that can be used to approach this conversation. I immediately decided that this was the direction my thesis was going to take.

This project analyzes three different case studies all pertaining to the idea of cultural appropriation, specifically subject appropriation of Native American groups encountered during the periods of New World exploration and Manifest Destiny. Each study will revolve around white, male artists that produced images depictive of "traditional" Native peoples living in North America during the life of each artist. I will argue that these representations ultimately affected the Native American identity and created an atmosphere favorable to their persecution. These artists are heavily responsible for the harmful stereotypes still associated with Native American people. My research will show that the information disseminated from these artists and circulated in North America and other Western countries, overshadowed any Native American attempt to establish their own identity for outsiders.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Heather L. Waldroup with the highest praises for her involvement in this process. Her direction and feedback significantly helped in shaping this paper and would not have been possible with out her guiding knowledge of this topic. We were able to work together to develop a project that has spurred in me a deep interest of this subject and something that I will carry with me into my future endeavors.

I would like to thank Dr. Mira R. Waits as the second reader for this thesis.

I would also like to thank Jim Toub, John Stevenson, Albert Stabler, and Jefford Vahlbusch for attending my thesis defense and offering their feedback on my research.

Lastly, I would like to thank Claire Dubnansky for also attending the defense of my thesis but also for being a great support throughout this entire process.

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INTRODUCTION

> Robbed of the possibility of being a full-fledged modern subject, a person of color is determined from the outside, as a thing, an object of scrutiny. The colonial gaze, determined by a set of technologies and conventions for viewing colonial realities, underwrote colonial power. It turned people into observed objects, and authorized the official discourses of European viewers, whose representations determined and fixed the status and stature of colonized subjects
>
> —Poornima Paidipaty, *Gaze, Colonial*, 262

This information introduces the core argument of this paper, in that, cultural appropriation and the colonial gaze relied on technologies and ideologies used in Western art. Subjects of colonial power were undermined by the supposedly true nature of the technologies they used and by the images they produced. For that reason, it is necessary to gain an understanding of what the term cultural appropriation means. It is quite a broad term that has many sub-categories within it; however, there is one specific perspective that would be useful for this paper's argument, and that is subject appropriation. This term comes from James O. Young and his article *Profound Offense and Cultural Appropriation*. He defines "subject appropriation" as it "occurs when an outsider represents members or aspects of another culture. This sort of appropriation would occur when an outsider makes the culture or lives of insiders the subject of a painting, story, film, or other work of art" (Young 136). The problem with this kind of appropriation lies within its ethical premise and each case study will show that problems arise when depictions of cultures are created by those with no experience in its customs or beliefs.

From this definition of subject appropriation, the main thing to focus on is the use of the term “outsider” and the actions that are associated with them. In this paper the outsiders are a group of white European explorers informing the public of their encounters with Native Americans. When depicting another culture, as the three case studies in this paper will show, there is a lack of understanding that prevents the artists from truly representing any Indigenous culture, which then relays that problem to those that view their works. From the first encounter between Native and European people to the age of Westward expansion, an attempt at formulating a concise story of the Native culture has been an important endeavor for most Europeans. When analyzing a culture there needs to be an identifier or identifiers that unite those groups together, which typically come from basic core values and beliefs (Young 136-137). However, when applied to the many different groups and tribes subjugated under the Native American name, it becomes impossible to provide an exact explanation as a singular group of people. To make clear, this paper is not arguing that there are no similarities between different Native American groups but instead recognize that representations by outsiders cannot produce a clear and concise explanation of their culture.

This now reveals the problems that I was speaking to earlier, in that the stereotypes remaining today portray Native Americans as a singular group with characteristics that are universal. With regards to the Native American struggle and appropriation of their lands, a conversation, that will continue throughout the entirety of this paper, needs to be had revolving the intersection of white European fantasy and offensive imagery. Since the very beginning Native culture and traditions have been subject to scrutiny by groups who have documented and depicted their lives, from their supposed discovery to Westward expansion to their persecution. Images of their clothing, daily life habits, rituals, landscapes, and homes were subjects of images

created for the circulation of information on a culture that no one in Europe knew much about. Almost all of these images were created by white European men who had privileged opportunities, whether invited by Native Americans or not, to document them.

What is troubling about the information that came from the documentation of these cultures, is the way in which these groups were portrayed. It starts with the attitudes that most explorers held when they first came across the Indigenous people of North and South America. It is quite obvious that Europeans thought themselves superior to any other races they discovered. A term that has been used since the eighteenth century to describe the frame of mind towards Native Americans came from the combination of their physical appearance and sub-par living practices. The information circulated from the encounters with different groups in the New World, labeled these people as savages (Honour 120). While analyzing who these people were, there was an attempt to portray them with fit and agile bodies, but their advancement as a society itself was deemed inferior to that of the Europeans. They were often compared to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and inevitably they became associated with cultures that weren't similar to their own (Honour 121). This didn't leave much room for them to establish their own identity in the minds of Westerners.

In this paper the analysis of the cultural appropriation of Native American Indians will consider the ways their culture has been subject to false representations by "outsiders" since their time of first contact. In this discussion, I will try to prove that images created by explorers and artists who were not a part of their culture have ultimately affected how these groups have been perceived. Their practices and circulation of these images were ultimately taken as truth, which left the Native Americans to fight against preconceived ideas of their own culture. This form of appropriation continued even after the colonies had been established and exploration into the

West had begun. Each image produced was created based on previous representation practices from others who had studied and created works based on these cultures.

There will be three case studies that will constitute the majority of this paper. All portray the kind of depictions that Native Americans found themselves subject to within these outsider works. They will show the fallacious intentions that most of these images contained and the bias instilled in the people who viewed them. When these images first began to circulate through Europe, they were taken as truth without much question for who they were representing (Greenblatt 5). The first case study introduced is derived from the Theodore De Bry engravings that were created in the sixteenth century. His engravings depict Native Americans from the coast of Virginia and North Carolina. This specific case study is a major example of the way in which European explorers physically depicted Native Americans in early images. It also relays the importance circulation had with the distribution of this kind of information.

De Bry was able to create these engravings from the expeditions of John White, who had recently explored parts of the New World. White brought back his drawings and stories of his encounters with Native Americans. “They, these ‘savages’, are not like us as we are now, the argument went, they are like us as we once were. Thus, as the European vision of the world moved westwards, so it moved also inexorably backwards” (Pagden 117). White brought this same mentality back to England and instilled it in his writing, which was later translated to De Bry’s engravings and inevitably circulated in other Western countries. When people began to migrate to the New World, they brought with them this same outlook, preventing the first contact with Native Americans to be without preconceived notions.

The second case study is centered on the landscape paintings produced by Albert Bierstadt in the nineteenth century. When he created his paintings, he was living in a very

different time from when the De Bry engravings were produced. However, similar problems were still evident in the fundamental depictions of the Native American culture. Attitudes towards the Native Americans were alike, in that they were still seen to be living beneath the standard Americans believed life should be conducted. He was extremely interested in Indigenous peoples and the place in which they resided (Junker 18). Bierstadt was another white educated man who chose to fantasize about Native American culture through his paintings. This is an example of how the previous case study's success had influenced later artists in thinking that this kind of representation of another culture is acceptable.

Bierstadt was producing paintings during the time known as Manifest Destiny. His paintings reflected the monumental task of expansion Westward through the use of overwhelming natural landscapes, typically including small settlements of Native Americans. The settlement of lands in California and other parts of the West, led to more opportunities in documenting Native Americans in landscapes that were relatively unfamiliar to the European explorer (Junker 15). As Swindall and Wallach note, "the United States grew considerably during the nineteenth century, beginning with the Louisiana Purchase of 1804, which doubled the size of the young republic" (Swindall, Wallach, 61). This mass shift to the West stimulated tensions between Native Americans living on these lands and those believing that the land was theirs to split apart. It is in this disregard for Native American authority that came the belief they should never attain their own sovereignty.

The last case study focuses on photographs by Edward Curtis produced during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He mainly focused on Native Americans located in the Midwest, Alaska, and parts of Canada. His photographs are known for having elaborately dressed "tribal" people and opportune snapshots of private ritual ceremonies. His use of

traditional clothing and landscape help add to the nostalgia of the Native American culture. In his book series, *The North American Indian*, he describes the tensions that existed between tribes and the American government at the time. The language used when speaking about Native Americans revealed that the outlook on their culture had not changed much from when they were first discovered, which proved that the same biases still existed in Euro-Americans (Curtis 91). Indigenous groups were still thought to be attached to a primeval way of life and from that were determined to be a fading group of people that didn't have a chance of surviving much longer.

Curtis grew up during the controversial treatment of Native Americans and their placement into reservations; convinced to leave their lands based off of promises the American government made to them. As Vizenor notes, "then, by chicanery, federal treaties, and military means natives were removed to reservations and nominated the vanishing race at the end of the nineteenth century" (Vizenor 183). The government systematically removed any chance for Native Americans to live in a self-sustaining community. Making them reliant on resources that the American government possessed, also preventing their "survival" as a group. Their Euro-American judgment believed them to be so primitive that their existence was coming to the end, the reservations they were living on only needed to support them long enough for their group to diminish.

In speaking to the approach explorers took to the first encounter with Native Americans, many couldn't accept that this part of the world had been untouched by white colonizers. As Greenblatt explains, "in the peculiar reverie that comes with listening to a language one does not understand, hearing it as an alien music, knowing only that a tale is being told, I allowed my mind to wander and discovered that I was telling myself one of the stories from the Arabian Nights, the tale of Sinbad and the roc" (Greenblatt 1). This one sentence imitates the thought

process of those encountering Native Americans and their culture for the first time. They were unable to understand why their culture functioned the way it did, so they associated them with things they have studied before, like ancient civilizations. Each engraving, painting or photograph incorporated what they knew with what was unknown of the culture they were unfamiliar with; no knowledge of their rituals and no understanding of their customs or way of life.

Most of the information from explorers were varied and random at best. Brief encounters with Native peoples and places were normally what occurred and still most explorers wrote about these places as if they had been studying them for years (Greenblatt 2). This should make you question the reliability and accuracy of the information circulated about each of these experiences. It is in the appropriation within these works that we find the fault in basic treatment of other cultures and peoples. Since, they believed themselves to be superior to the Native American or any other ethnicities, correct documentation escaped their motivation to record these groups. Here I find it appropriate to introduce the idea of the primitive, because it portrays how Westerners perceived and discussed races outside of their own. As Torgovnik explains, "by the 1920's, the ancient and courtly had been removed from the category of the primitive, which from then on referred exclusively to "tribal" art—Native American, Eskimo, African, and Oceanic" (Torgovnick 19). This reveals that the idea of the primitive moved from ancient locations to areas that were often considered unprogressive and outside of Western control. The belief that these cultures had some kind of connection to ancient civilizations is important when analyzing the Theodore De Bry engravings and the decision to depict them with a physique resembling Greek and Roman statuary. Though they may not have used the term primitive to

describe the Native American people, the principles of the term still remain heavily connected to their use of documentation.

Today the "primitive" is associated with offensive connotations when applied to a group that it is being used to describe. However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the word was thought to be inherently paired with groups with an underdeveloped nature, when compared to a Western sense of progress (Torgovnick 19). This approach not only clouds the judgement of those documenting Native Americans, but it creates a hierarchy for the images they produce, allowing them to claim what they depict to be true in nature. Also giving others a platform to follow suit and continue manifesting the idea of Indigenous groups to be savage and unworthy of humane treatment. Marianna Torgovnick explains the flaw of Western of approach in relation to the analysis between the insider and outsider:

> The antievolutionist, cultural relativity of these views was available early in the history of anthropology, and it competed with views of primitive societies as 'early,' 'simple,' and 'developing' forms of human existence. But cultural relativism needed time to really take hold since it challenged so strongly Western assumptions of superiority. It required readjustments in thought that stripped away decades, even centuries, of usage which saw primitive societies not as various and complete in themselves but as developing toward Western norms (19).

These Western norms are what set in motion the critical persecution of Native Americans.

A culture unable to progress in the way that aligned with Western thought was inherently classified beneath the European standard of living, which set in motion the acceptance of information produced by Euro-American artists. Native Americans would have never depicted

themselves in the way the artists analyzed in this paper did, especially because they did not think of themselves to be a part of the Western construct of the primitive. However, the privilege shown in each of these case studies proves that accuracy was not what these artists sought but instead an image portraying the fantasy of the Native American. The technologies used by the colonial powers, which for this paper are engravings, paintings, and photography, set in motion to construct the primitive and savage within the depictions of other cultures. Indigenous people were not seen as progressive and therefore, were treated as objects for white explorers and settlers to exploit.

THEODORE DE BRY

In this first case study, Theodore De Bry's engravings clearly follow the practice of colonial representation. The sixteenth century had brought with it the first encounters between Native American people and Europeans in the New World. This new age of exploration uncovered lands that had been thought to be non-existent up until this point in history. This brought with it an excitement and thirst for an understanding of these new places, spurring a need for information about them and the people who inhabited these areas. Instead of traveling to these places, De Bry took inspiration from someone who had the opportunity to experience these locations himself, that being John White. I will argue that the images produced by De Bry weren't necessarily factual representations of Native Americans but depictions of the ideal human body in the European mindset, a standard developed from Greco-Roman prototypes. The use of these standards tells us more about the European idea of the human body, rather than the ones of actual Native Americans (Greenblatt 7). He was able to use technologies of his time, engraving specifically, to circulate his images throughout the European continent. Ultimately, De Bry constructed a false identity for the Native American culture for people who came into contact with his representations.

Returning to the idea of the colonial gaze and how it relates back to the efforts of Europe to remain as the top power within the world order, artists were able to use the idea of the colonial gaze in the images they circulated throughout the continent. It was these representations that determined who the Native Americans were, instead of letting their true forms present their own knowledge. Though at the time the Theodore De Bry engravings were produced, the Americas had early established territories but had yet to become fully colonized. It was in these engravings, that the first images of Native Americans made their way around the world and were

essentially the first impression this culture had made on anyone outside of their region. These depictions established how the Native Americans were to be perceived by Europeans whenever the two cultures came into contact with one another. They still had an effect on those that were able to view them and from that were able to create a stereotype for Indigenous groups in North and South America in the minds of Europeans, which would be detrimental to their treatment when the British began to establish more colonies in the New World.

In this case study, I will discuss Theodore De Bry along with his engravings and their circulation throughout the European continent. De Bry, originally from Liége in what is now Belgium, was traditionally trained as a goldsmith and an engraver (UNCL). He was also known for being a bookseller and publisher during his time spent in Frankfort (Redfield 7). During the sixteenth century, interest in New World exploration began to take hold within Europe. There was an urge to spread this information across the continent and share with everyone the encounters of the explorers. One instance of this was the colony of Roanoke, which was established in 1585, directly at the height of exploration (UNCL). It was in the efforts of documenting the colony and Native American groups in the area, that the De Bry engravings took inspiration.

After explorers brought back the information recorded during their time there, efforts were now focused on how to get that information out to the rest of the world. De Bry made a trip to England in 1587, where he acquired original drawings of the Indigenous groups that had been subject to observation during this time (Redfield 8). These drawings originally came from a man named John White whom De Bry would emulate in his engravings and come to be known for. Shortly after obtaining this information De Bry relocated to Frankfort where he worked with another engraver, Gijsbert van Veen, to produce his ten volume “America” series (UNCL). His

series would not only include illustrations from the colony of Roanoke, but it would also incorporate information that had been accumulated from other expeditions of the New World (UNCL).

In the production of these series and in an effort to reach the largest audience possible, De Bry produced copies of it in Latin, French, and German (Redfield 8). This shows the determination to circulate these images and information to as many parts of the world as possible. The trouble with that, comes with how these Indigenous groups were represented, not only in the De Bry engravings but in other mediums of representation during this time. As Poornima Paidipaty explains, various mediums, such as newspapers and popular magazines, were used to distribute images produced by visitors of the New World, to a European audience that was largely mixed (Paidipaty 261). As you can see there were many places that people could find this kind of information, making it hard for anyone to believe anything other than what was being presented to them. It is important to note that German and Latin editions were completed; however, the French edition was never completed (Redfield 8). Language was an important aspect in displaying his editions to his audience. However, it wasn't as much as a focus as the images were, and for those who couldn't read, the depictions became even more important to understanding Native Americans. Images such as these present a visual understanding of these groups, and even though the language connected to these engravings weren't universal, the images still were.

A brief discussion to how De Bry formulated his images for representation may help in trying to understand how people gained meaning from them. As Gaudio notes, "Clearly he was not un-accustomed to engaging in that intense visual concentration on the formal play of line and shape that characterizes ornamental work" (Gaudio 48). As an engraver, De Bry lent himself to

the more ornamental side of decoration, compared to others at the time, especially when compared to the John White drawings, from which he drew inspiration. This style was known as Mannerism during the sixteenth century, which incorporated naturalist qualities and elongated figures used during the Renaissance (Wundram 1). This particular use shows De Bry using elements he was familiar with, just as he used Greco-Roman prototypes to depict his figures.

His tendency to add extra decoration to the image presented, causes one to believe that this initiated a dramatic shift in how they were originally created. His depictions of the New World were affected by his choice to add ornamentation to the images (Gaudio 48). Knowing this, the accuracy of the scenes was not something that reigned as an instrumental part to his project. The production of factual material diminished the more he added his own style to White's original drawings. It is unlikely that he focused on depicting Native Americans true to their own form, one because the drawings he based his engravings on didn't, and second his work favored a technique that emphasized decorative line and shape.

This style then lends itself to being harder for his viewers to pick through the fanciful scenes presented to them (Gaudio 60). They are confronted with dramatic human forms used in most of his engravings, which prevent the audience finding meaning in anything other than the graphic narrative created by White and De Bry. When connecting it to Native Americans they included in their depictions, their image was used in association with what they knew. As Gaudio explains, "it is often noted that De Bry's engravings translate White's ethnographically perceptive studies into the classicized form of European mannerism" (Gaudio 52), meaning that they used Greco-Roman standards to build the figures in the images. The perfect musculature of the entire body, facial structure, and even white skin were all elements of Renaissance quality work. It also brought with it the possibility to accept spiritual scenes as normal occurrences. The

specific subject depicted could take on a character outside of human ability, which confronted the viewer with an overwhelming amount of form, color, and emotion (Wundram 3). Likeness between Native Americans and the engravings was almost completely non-existent. How then were these images taken to be factual depictions of White's encounters with the Native Americans?

We may find the answer in understanding who his audience was at the time these would have been distributed.

> These New World savages, for example, as they sing and 'make merrie,' are engaged in a form of prayer, and one can easily imagine De Bry's Protestant audience associating this scene of New World religious ritual with various European contexts: with the 'superstitious' rites of pagan antiquity, contemporary witchcraft, and Roman Catholicism, to name three. (Gaudio 47).

From this we can understand a few things, one that his main audience were those of Protestant faith and second that they often understood meaning through their own experience of Europe at the time. Their perceptions of the New World were shaped by the growing tensions between Protestants and Catholics during the sixteenth century (Greenblatt 8). The images that depicted Native Americans were associated with the problems Protestants held with Catholics, further hindering their understanding of the De Bry engravings. These engravings contained a convergence of cultures and religions, all believing in different ideologies, in one work of art. Instead of understanding the engravings to depict one perspective, it should instead be analyzed through three main points of information. The first, the representation of a culture unknown to those in Europe, two by the person (De Bry and White) depicting them, and three by the meaning applied by the audience.

As previously mentioned, meaning came from experience and when the engravings were distributed, the belief in pagan worship and witchcraft was at a high. “It is therefore difficult to imagine that associations with witchcraft, on some level, would not have passed through the mind of any Protestant viewer who took a serious look at De Bry’s image—even if this occurred only through association with ‘superstitious’ Catholic ceremony, which was itself commonly linked to witchcraft” (Gaudio 60). When De Bry’s images were dispersed through Europe, their content was similar to what his audience had come to regard as demonic and savage. In turn, this prevented them from understanding Native American culture to be different from what they had come to resent or fear. Their only association with this kind of imagery was negative, so when applying that to their growing knowledge of Native Americans, all they had to use in understanding them came from previous exposure to devil worship: ultimately, preventing an original identity for Native Americans without association to European experience. To answer the previous question simply, these images were seen as factual because the audience that they were directed towards understood their actions to be associated with ideas they had come into contact with previously in their own culture.

It was from Theodore De Bry and his engravings, that the first representations of Native Americans and other Indigenous groups were able to help construct a European social order in relation to the rest of the world (Paidipaty 261). With the introduction of new lands and people to the established world order, there was a need to understand where Native American groups fell within that order. Exploration and discovery had removed the conviction of supremacy from Europeans and replaced it with uncertainty in their minds. This shocking new change made it easier for the European public to take these images at face value, instead of critically analyzing them. It is doubtful that they would want anyone replacing their position at the top of the world

order, so it was easier to believe that all of these groups were savages and lived a primitive life than trying to understand their true nature. As Paidipaty explains, "by representing the non-European 'other' as a definable object of visual scrutiny, such work also helped Europeans establish a sense of cultural and scientific supremacy within an emerging global order" (Paidipaty 261). In this the European invaders were able to control the narrative of these new lands. It was not in the best interest for representations of Native Americans to prove them as a competent and well-rounded society. These groups needed to be displayed as primitive so that when time came to colonize and expand, people wouldn't oppose their removal from regions they had lived in for centuries.

Let us remember the definition of subject appropriation presented in the introduction; it "occurs when an outsider represents members or aspects of another culture" (Young 136). In this kind of appropriation that is present in the various representations of Native Americans associated with the De Bry engravings there is the idea of the colonial gaze, a certain way of looking, perceiving, and documenting another culture that can be associated with a certain group of people. This idea is brought up in Stephen Greenblatt's, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*; however, he has termed it A Priori Ideological Determinism, which is "the notion that particular modes of representation are inherently and necessarily bound to a given culture or class or belief system, and that their effects are unidirectional" (4). It is in this definition that we can conclude that European representations are easily grouped together because of the kind of representations circulated during this time. Again, this kind of information allows viewers to understand more about the European process of representation than the actual groups these representations depict (Greenblatt 7).

Information coming from the explorers returning back from the New World were highly varied and random at best. Most came from brief encounters with native peoples and places, and still most of them wrote about these places as if they had been studying them for years (Greenblatt 2). This calls into question the accuracy and reliability of the explorers and what they produced. It seems they were trying to create a story or fairytale for most people to believe. They no longer deemed the truth to be appropriate when depicting the Native American culture. A fantasy is what they strived to create, one that would excite the people of Europe and one that would damage the identity of the Indigenous people of North and South America. Greenblatt notes that, "listening to a language one does not understand, hearing it as an alien music, knowing only that a tale is being told..." (Greenblatt 1). Stephen Greenblatt represents the approach by explorers and Europeans when it came to learning about Native American culture. There was not much of an effort to understand the diverse culture that was presented to them. Explorers studied their movements, customs, and relationships without really developing the knowledge needed to portray their culture correctly. I believe this also contributed the idea of the fantasy surrounding Native Americans. During explorations there wasn't an effort to penetrate the wall that existed between the two parties. It created this idea of the unknown that eventually became associated with Indigenous people; formulating a secrecy and an intrigue that resonated with Europeans when reading and viewing the information produced by explorers.

Coming back to the topic of circulation of these kinds of images and texts, none of the damage that has been done to these cultures' identity would have been possible if it weren't for the institutions that made it possible: "in the modern world order it is with capitalism that the proliferation and circulation of representations achieved a spectacular...global magnitude" (Greenblatt 6). Even though De Bry acquired the John White drawings in England and produced

them in Germany, their reach was much further than these two countries. Through the capitalist systems in place in many of the European countries, the accumulation of many of the engravings was made possible. The success of his engravings can be measured by the sheer amount of people they reached, not by the "realistic" depictions many believed them to be. They also reached the point where other artists were using elements of the images in their own work (Keazor 134). This only adds to the places his depictions reached and the inaccurate information they presented.

After Theodore De Bry's death, his sons made an effort to continue the production of the series. They were able to create connections with other engravers and publishers who were already connected to the family through marriage (Redfield 8). His engravings became the family's life's work and in that they found their purpose in reproducing these images. This just shows the efforts that were put into creating a platform for this type of information to exist. The continued support and commerce that these images found, provided an atmosphere for other images from the New World to thrive. This stream of information is what lead to the creation of Native American perception. It was in these images that people took their ideas from in order to "understand" how these Indigenous groups lived. I put understand in quotations because as I will later discuss, most of these images depicted these groups incorrectly. There wasn't a true understanding of how these groups actually lived; these false representations are what led many to believe them as primitive savages.

Throughout the various discussions in this first case study there have been a couple of mentions of a person named John White. I have established that Theodore De Bry took inspiration from his drawings but there is a need to expand upon the importance of his drawings to fully understand what I mean by inspiration. John white was sent to the New World by Queen

Elizabeth in an effort to record the topography, nature, and its inhabitants (Redfield 13). In particular, White was sent to Virginia with a writer by the name of Thomas Hariot. Combined, the two of them brought back descriptions, stories, paintings, and drawings of their experience with Native American cultures to England (UNCL). De Bry acquired his drawings during a visit to London and took them back to Frankfort where he published and produced his engravings. Understand that De Bry formulated his engravings from a primary source and not from his own studies and is important to keep in mind. This left more of an opportunity for him to change aspects of the drawings to fit his liking. To show the kind of discrepancies between the two, the next part of this case study will focus on specific drawings from John White and Theodore De Bry.

First, we will look at a drawing from John White titled *A Priest or Conjurer* (Figure 1.). It is important to keep in mind that, though John White's drawings resemble Native Americans more closely than the De Bry engravings, they still were drawn with biased pre-conceptions of the people and its culture. In this first drawing, there is a depiction of an older man standing on his right foot with his left extended in the air behind him. Other than the fur pelt and fringed pouch hung on a belt at his waist, the male figure is completely nude. His left arm is bent slightly and raised next to his head and his right is also slightly bent and stretched behind him. He is looking up and to the left with a bird drawn directly next to his head. In the book that contained the John White drawings, an excerpt accompanied the images describing the context for where the image came from. These excerpts were written by White and to get a full understanding of the position most of the colonizers held in relation to Indigenous groups, I feel it is appropriate to include one of them:

> There are common among them, certain Priests, or conjurers, familiar with the devil; who, in their incantations make most strange and unnatural gesticulations. Their heads are shaven, except on the crown, where it is in a crest like the rest, and they wear a bird above the ear, as a symbol of their black art. They go naked with the exception of a skin hung before, and kept up by a string about the loins; to which is also suspended a pouch, as represented. The natives have great faith in their predictions which are often verified.

This excerpt is describing the aforementioned drawing but includes the language that reveals the truth of how White and many of the other explorers felt towards the Native Americans. From this excerpt it is clear that these cultures were observed but only as the primitive people that happened to live off these lands. There was no respect for their culture, and it is clear that European colonists believed themselves and their lifestyles to be better than anyone else (Greenblatt 9). To continue that notion, his depictions of Native Americans needed to portray them as a culture unable to compete with that of Europe's. Especially when "black art" was something they had come to fear and understand as harmful to their society, especially when considering the tensions between Protestants and Catholics.

The De Bry engraving that is paired with this drawing from White is the *Native American Conjurer* (Figure 2.). The figure in the engraving is very similar to the one in the White drawing, however, the coloring and the muscular features of the body are different. In many of De Bry's engravings the figures take on a character completely different from the ones that are in White's drawings. The faces of the figures were adjusted, and the poses were used to mimic traditional statuary (UNCL). This kind of depiction was that of the Greco-Roman style De Bry instituted in most of his engravings. The finished product of these engravings depicted the Native Americans more like Europeans than that of actual Native Americans. As Keazor states, "thus while White's

retain unmistakably Indian features, the face's and figures in De Bry's prints are no less unmistakably European, however strange their hairstyles and painted ornaments" (Keazor 134). It is interesting to think of why this may have been done. Was it to appeal to those who were going to be viewing them? Was there more of an appreciation for this kind of male depiction? Or did they believe this to be truly what the Indigenous groups looked like?

What may help to answer this question is to understand what kind of figures were typically seen within the art context of the time. Keazor notes that, "...he tried to explain this kind of representation with the fact that 'at a time when the only excepted models for the depiction of the nude were antique statues, De Bry and the artists he employed could not have conceived the nude figure of an Indian in any other way" (Keazor 145). This brings us back to the topic of representation within the European context. These depictions tell us more about the European process of representation and their ideal form, rather than the actual culture they are depicting. As Greenblatt argues, "Cultures tend to have fantastically powerful assimilative mechanisms" (Greenblatt 4). In this example the assimilative nature is shown within the efforts to depict Native American bodies as traditional Greek statues, something which is also familiar in Renaissance paintings.

The main figure occupies the center of the engraving, and again stands out with his innately carved muscular body paired with pale white skin and light blonde hair. At his waist he is wearing a fringed pouch and a fur belt, just as he is in the original White drawing. His pose is as the same of the figure in White's drawing, but now he is seen within a natural landscape. The figure stands on a mound overlooking a river, where Native Americans are in canoes hunting a flock of birds that are nearby. These figures are also scantily dressed, with only a fur pelt to cover themselves. The land in the background is also occupied by two Native American men

hunting a deer, among a lush tree line. What is interesting to consider is the symbolism that the bow and arrow holds for the Native American, especially when used in scenes similar to the one of De Bry. As Gaudio recognizes, "When a figure is intended to stand for America, or simply to embody the savage condition of the New World, we can usually expect to find a bow and arrow in the hands or at the feet" (Gaudio 7). In the case of the *Native American Conjurer*, the arrow appears with the figures that are in the act of hunting. Hunting, here is displayed as a means of survival, something that is innately primitive and essential for Native Americans. It also reveals that a system of symbols had been constructed to associate with the "primitive" and culture of Indigenous people, creating a universal form for understanding them. This form of iconography aided in constructing an identity for Native groups.

The coloration of the engravings also presents a big problem. De Bry wouldn't have been the one to add the color to the engravings; instead that would have been done by someone hired to complete the task. It should be noted that the colorist chose to add pale skin and blonde hair to the figures in the engravings, different from the dark hair and skin that were represented in White's paintings (UNCL), though, it is likely that De Bry had a hand in these decisions. An idea of why this might have been done comes from the University of North Carolina's library archival collection, where the engraving being analyzed for this paper was acquired. The possible reason for using pale skin and blonde hair may have been due to the fact the German artist designated to paint the engravings was unaware that anyone else could possibly look different from what he saw around him. Instead of using these engravings to help educate people, such as the artist who colored them, they were instead profited from, at the expense of a non-European culture, all while damaging the identity of the Native American people.

The title also raises concerns when thinking about immediate impressions of the engraving. The terminology automatically reveals the person in the image to be someone associated with conjuring, which, discussed previously, is something that was associated with devil worship and witchcraft. Michael Gaudio reveals that this could have been done to evoke a specific response:

> In White's original watercolor, this figure is actually labeled the 'flyer,' a word that suggests the shaman's capacity for flight between earthly and spiritual realms. The altered title that appears in the *Report*, however, with the aid of Harriot's caption, would have been more immediately digestible to an audience steeped in popular reports of witchcraft and magic (56).

Again, this kind of language would have been used in an effort to stereotype Native Americans in similar categories to that of witches and pagan worshipers. In that process, creating another culture to be feared and hated, and one that demonstrated qualities outside of Christian ideology. The audience targeted would have also been prepared to accept this stereotype because of the heavy belief in similar activities occurring in their own countries.

The Theodore De Bry engravings were a form of information used during the sixteenth century to help construct an identity for Native Americans, in order for Europeans to better understand their customs, traditions, and values. However, as this case study has demonstrated, many problems arise when analyzing De Bry's representations of their culture. Technology allowed him to reproduce his engravings in a way that made it possible to circulate them throughout Europe. This form of circulation is what helped to form a universal identity for Native Americans, one that was negative and detrimental to their understanding. His images needed to depict their culture in a way that his audience could relate to, which is why they were

depicted with the Greco-Roman physique and associated with activities such as devil worship. Ultimately, this led to a false interpretation of the New World and its inhabitants, instead revealing more about their own understanding of European culture than that of Native American.

ALBERT BIERSTADT

This next case study will transition from the discussion of Theodore De Bry and his engravings to Albert Bierstadt and his larger than life landscape paintings. Though these two differ in medium and time period in which they were created, they still depict Native Americans in their supposedly "natural" environments. These images should still be analyzed as the ones before, in such that they don't necessarily depict what life was actually like for Native Americans during this time; instead they conveyed how the artist wanted them portrayed. These images also included any bias that existed towards these Indigenous groups. In this case study, I will discuss the various ways in which these images still affected Native American perception, especially during the time of exploration into the American West, which was thought to be inherently connected to the idea of the sublime. These paintings similarly portray the supposedly primitive and savage lifestyle that was seen within the drawings and engravings from John White and Theodore De Bry; however, they differ in the reasoning for their creation. As we saw, in the past discussion, circulation reached an innovative point for these kind of images during that time. With the Bierstadt paintings their sheer size didn't allow for the similar expansive distribution of his works. Therefore, his particular audience remained within those who had access to major art institutions during the time. However, the large scale of his paintings became important to his success, because it aided in his portrayal of the fantasy of Native Americans.

When discussing the Native American connection to his paintings, the scale becomes an important tool in creating a story and bias towards them as a group (Mayer, Myers 56). This sense of awe that his paintings created provided a culture of fantasy for the Indigenous groups he portrayed. What I mean by that is, with his fantastical and large-scale depictions of uncharted territories and landscapes, he allowed mystery to form around these groups. He produced visual

information that was left unexplained and for the spectator to decipher. He surrounded his depictions of Native Americans with large mountain ranges, expansive plains, and vast bodies of water. Native American groups were encompassed by this overwhelming amount of nature and seemed to be at the mercy of what surrounded them.

Bierstadt employed the use of the sublime, a popular nineteenth century American tradition, along with scale to portray Native Americans and the West. The sublime has been defined as "capable of eliciting emotion through grandeur, splendor, and immeasurable qualities, in an attempt to inspire awe" (Rodgers 1). As Moss notes, "since it was applicable to objects of art and to empirical nature alike, the sublime was particularly suited to register and interpret the 'uncivilized' wilderness of the American continent" (Moss 389). The nature he chose came from land that was largely uncharted and unknown to those outside of its territory. These natural phenomena became the subject for landscape painters to attach to their subjects, dwarfing their stature so the vastness of the land could take over (Rodgers 3).

Native American communities within the West had simultaneously been linked with the idea of the "uncivilized" through their paring to this underdeveloped region. Native Americans were already seen as a primitive group, so when paired with the sublime, they are again subject to the notion that they were an unprogressive group of people. One that had no control of their destiny, which Euro-Americans believed to be extinction, and one that lived according to the mercy of the landscape. They had yet to learn to use the land to their own will, but instead let it dominate their livelihood. Bierstadt's paintings depicted the one part of the North American continent that had yet to be brought under the advancement of American society, which saw an increase in industrialization years before his expeditions. His paintings portrayed the Native

Americans to be overwhelmed by nature and in a position of inevitable decline, which permitted Bierstadt to continue his quest to paint them as such.

It will be beneficial to briefly discuss some background on Bierstadt, so we can gain an understanding of what lead him to his career and interests. Bierstadt's family came from Düsseldorf, Germany and in an attempt to escape the tensions of the time, his mother and father chose to relocate to America. His siblings and parents traveled on the *Hope*, a ship traveling across the Atlantic in 1832, aimed for New Bedford, which was a known whaling port that drew in a vast amount of diverse people (Hendricks 13). They decided to settle in the town that the ship docked, and from there created a life for their children. The family wasn't particularly wealthy in their newly designated home town and Bierstadt, with the rest of his siblings attended public school.

He was fortunate enough to receive a sponsorship to further his education from a local man in New Bedford because his family would not have financially been able to send their son to study in Europe without his help (Hendricks 19). He spent close to four years there, traveling around the continent sketching scenes that he encountered along the way. He returned to New Bedford around September of 1857, where he opened his own studio and where he began to produce paintings based on images he drew of European landscapes and people (Hendricks 49). This kind of experience and education allowed Bierstadt to revel in the privilege that came with being a white Euro-American male. His experiences came from his ability to leave the US and further his skills as an artist. Traveling was something that he was heavily interested in, and when he returned to America, he was given the same opportunity to exploit this privilege with expeditions to the West.

Bierstadt's first trip to the American West came in 1859, when he joined Colonel Frederick West Lander and Boston artist. F.S. Frost on an expedition to visit a previous trail laid out by Lander, who had hoped to plan a new route to California (Hendricks 63). On his journey he was able to experience the Wind River Mountains, the Colorado River, and the Rocky Mountains. While he was there, he made many stereoscopic images, with the help of Frost (Hendricks 73). These images were then brought back to his studio for further inspection. After this first trip, Bierstadt would return to the West two more times, in 1863 and 1867. His second trip was during the American Civil War. He still resided in the North, where recovery from economic hardship was still underway. However, British trade alliances were able to stimulate the art market, which is something that Bierstadt was able to take advantage of (Hendricks 113). In the years before he left for the second time, he saw the war falling in favor of the North.

Fitz Hugh Ludlow was to join Bierstadt on his second journey, where one would take notes and the other would draw sketches of the scenery (Hendricks 116). They went through Denver, Salt Lake City, Yosemite Valley, San Francisco, up to Oregon and retuned to New York within the same year. The first two trips allowed Bierstadt to use these locations, especially Yosemite Valley and the Rocky Mountains, to understand how identity can be found in landscapes. The third trip West brought with it the use of the industrialization of transportation. In the past, Bierstadt had to travel by wagon or steamboat, but now he had the opportunity to travel by railroad (Hendricks 205). Once again Yosemite Valley and San Francisco became one of his most visited locations. He continued to produce copious amounts of sketches for each location, even publishing some of his favorites (Hendricks 217). It is clear to see that these expeditions were what shaped his career as a landscape painter. His experiences with the West

led his work to reflect the awe he felt traveling from place to place, which became the motivation to depict Native Americans dwarfed by the sublime of the West.

Again, in 1863 he began exploration in the Northwest and as well as California's Yosemite Valley (Junker 18). He was curious about indigenous people and interested in natural bounty, geological science, environmentalism, and national rhetoric (Junker 7). Their history or lack thereof at this time, was what proved interesting to Bierstadt. In a letter that he wrote to *The Crayon*, he describes his time spent in the Rocky Mountains:

> The manners and customs of the Indians are still as they were hundreds of years ago, and now is the time to paint them, for they are rapidly passing away; and soon will be known only in history. We have taken many stereoscopic views, but not so many of the mountain scenery as I could wish, owing various obstacles attached to the process, but still a goodly number. We have a great many Indian subjects. We were quite fortunate in getting them, the natives not being very willing to have the brass tube of the camera pointed at them (Hendricks 73).

The way he speaks about the Native Americans is equally disturbing as his belief that it was acceptable to depict these groups without permission. He treats them as if they were there for his own benefit or a species to be studied before it goes extinct. This is an example of white Euro-American privilege and the way they perceived themselves to be compared to Indigenous groups. As Clifford writes, "since they were generally treated as passive specimens or victims, their views seldom entered the historical record" (Clifford 439). They had no say in how they were being portrayed to the public, but by this time many had already determined them to be fading away, a problem that was no longer to be worried about.

It was after his first expeditions that he began to gain recognition within New Bedford which led to his involvement in various exhibitions where his work was put on display and shown to the public for the first time. There were many reactions to his pieces, and one reveals the attraction of his work:

> It is significant that the large size, though remarked upon, did not strongly offend the viewers. They wondered why—and wondered also if it was a good idea—but it did not disturb them to the point where it prevented them, from seeing the painter's artistic qualities. This must have been because it did not strike them as pretentious, but simply as Bierstadt's way of painting. This way later became standard and was the cause of much harsher criticism than the artist now received (Hendricks 56).

Though this comes from the beginning of his career, it is clear to see that many were wowed by the size of his pieces, these images could not be ignored when looked at. His paintings created a sense of awe for the viewer, something to look at as a depiction of this lush and lavish world. This kind of scale produced almost a new dimension that allowed spectators to enter through and experience the American West. This was especially significant considering most of his works were centered around his travels in the West, which was a place many had not yet experienced.

Again, his work would not have been able to reach the same scale of circulation that Theodore De Bry's engravings would have. However, that does not mean there was not a certain level of distribution to his paintings in America and parts of Canada. Bierstadt heavily relied on exhibits and patrons for his work to gain popularity, and sometimes he would give away his work to friends or institutions. His earlier works were exhibited in areas that were close to his home in New Bedford, in places spanning from John Hopkins' store to the New England Art Union in Boston (Hendricks 16). He also found that patrons of his earlier work stuck with him

through the span of his career, like the Hathaway family (Hendricks 17). It is from this that his work began to reach places outside of his hometown, which led to other opportunities to exhibit in lager institutions and gain a bigger following.

Institutions such as the National Academy of Design in New York and the Athenaeum in Boston began to show his work in large exhibits with other prominent artists of the time (Hendricks 58). He also became obsessed with making sure that buyers of his work were completely satisfied with the paintings, and if not, would offer to give then another painting or paint an entirely new one (Hendrick 58). It seems that Bierstadt would do anything to get his work recognized and approved of by the people who viewed them. Other institutions had acquired his works were the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Worcester Art Museum. The positive reception of his larger works only encouraged him to continue to produce paintings of similar nature. From this we can conclude that most who came into contact with his work had the privilege of frequenting these institutions and opportunity to buy and sell works of this magnitude. This adds to the idea that depictions of Native Americas were available to be purchased for purposes of pleasing its buyer, making them a spectacle for White art collectors to exploit.

Earlier in this case study, I briefly mentioned circulation and the ability or non-ability in this case, to circulate Bierstadt's images past the New World. Compared to the De Bry engravings that were discussed earlier, his paintings didn't hold the same influence when it came to infiltrating multiple regions in such a short period of time, at first. However, this does not remove the impact of these images in relation to appropriating Native American culture. Perhaps, it could be argued that they were even more important to those who viewed them and the region that they were contained to, because the audience it did reach were the ones who had the

potential and power to come into contact with Native Americans and influence their treatment later on. These ideas and prejudices were the ones that would influence a lot of those who deemed it acceptable to remove these groups from their own lands.

The finished product of his paintings would have been displayed on the East coast, where he returned after documenting his observations. Meaning, those that were able to view them wouldn't have much experience with the land and people he portrayed. This is where the idea of fantasy and the fetishization of Indigenous groups comes in. It has already been established that Europeans and European-Americans believed themselves to be superior to these groups, and these kinds of paintings only further that notion. Paintings like this gave them the opportunity to construct an identity for Native Americans, even though there was no real interaction with them. They were able to take what they saw from images like this and formulate conclusions, like how they lived, dressed, and existed in relation to the landscape that they inhabited. This kind of fetishization with Native Americans later led to movies that were directed at younger generations. They would have used depictions and images that would attract people to the movies, changing how these groups traditionally represent themselves to what would be the more marketable construct of their culture (Honour 235). This just shows that this kind of information continues to exist and affect perception of Indigenous groups long after they were originally produced.

At this point, I find it necessary to discuss the more technical side of painting and in particular, landscape painting during the nineteenth century. At the start of Bierstadt's process, he would begin with a sketch or a stereographic photograph he created at the original location, mostly depicting people or landscapes (Mayer, Myers 58). It would have been impossible for him to create the work he did and include the details of his scene with just one visit to that

particular location. With the help of the stereographs and other types of photographs he was able to capture what he needed and take that back to his studio so he could work on the painting in his own time, without the pressure of losing the landscape in front of him. However, a quote from the artist himself reveals how the Native American groups, subject to his study, felt about it. "Also stereographs, the latter proving especially useful, the artist said, 'for discreetly making likeness of Indians, who were reluctant to pose'" (Junker 18). It is in this small statement we can conclude various Native American groups disliked outsiders invading their settlements in order to take pictures of them. The use of the word "pose" also suggests that these images are not as authentic as they are made out to be. There was probably an effort to position members of Native American groups in a way that was interesting to the photographer, instead of what was truthful for the Native American.

As just mentioned, the stereoscope, was one of the tools that Bierstadt used to take images back to his studio, called stereographs. They became important to preserving his experience of the American West. The stereograph used two mirrors, one for each eye, so that when combined, the photograph presented itself as three dimensional (Silverman 730). This allowed for Bierstadt to "accurately" represent what he saw while on his expeditions, at least that is what this machine was understood to do for the artists using it in tandem with their work. The ability to preserve the images for later, also gave Bierstadt or any other artist the chance to alter any part of the stereograph he wanted. The stereograph was true in a sense that its forms presented exactly what was meant to be shown, just as Bierstadt had attempted to use his paintings to portray the supposedly true idea of the Western landscape.

Hs paintings also presented themselves with three-dimensional characteristics, adding to their size and sheer magnitude of the landscapes, especially when compared to the small figures

of the Native Americans presented with them. As one scholar notes, “based on sturdy Victorian scientific principles, the stereoscope re-created three-dimensional perception with perfect fidelity” (Silverman 736). Therefore, each landscape was created off of the three-dimensional version, portraying what Bierstadt painted, as what he saw. Technology was at the heart as to why Bierstadt was able to create the kind of paintings he did. Giving him the ability to bring these expansive landscapes into his studio, providing him time to focus on the specific scenario he wanted to paint. Without the potential to capture the constantly changing natural landscape with the stereoscope, his paintings would not have presented the authenticity of the West, as they were perceived to do. Silverman goes on to say, “yet, even his extreme estimate of the instrument’s potential hinged on a principle expressed by many others in his day—the unique stereoscopic medium captured the visual essence of nature” (Silverman 738). Many wanted to perceive the West as this untamed and magical place that had yet to be touched by modern technology, a fantasy in its own right. White settler Americans thought of it as land that had the potential to double the Euro-American imprint and project America as a global force. Bierstadt’s paintings needed to match that expectation, bringing to his audience the wonder that was the West, including portrayal of the American belief that it was their right and duty to extend their power over it.

From these photographs, he would then create a detailed study or studies depending on his level of satisfaction, that he could work from when he was actually painting the scene (Mayer, Myers 60). Bierstadt’s style was noticeably different than what most had seen in America at the time and notably similar to the style found in Düsseldorf, where he studied for a period of time. It is in Mayer and Myers’s description of his work, that it is easy to gain an understanding of how his paintings were studied:

> In some passages, especially in the sunlit mountainside, the paint appears to have been quite viscous and sticky, forming small, stiff peaks as it came off of the artist's brush. Parts of the rocky foreground in the lower left were clearly painted in several layers over paint that was already dry, and there is some traction crackle in the nearby dark evergreen trees (61).

One particular aspect of his work that really portrayed the thought that he put into displaying his paintings, was the lighting that was constructed around his pieces. When he first began producing his paintings, lighting practices were not sufficient enough to display his pieces the way he preferred. However, towards the height of his career he formulated a way that would specifically enhance his pieces so that it portrayed exactly what he wanted (Mayer, Myers 56). "Bierstadt seems to have left less to the whims of weather or chance. The lighting was described as very carefully controlled as well as by the construction of raised galleries" (Mayer, Myers 56). It wasn't necessarily what was displayed that solely created the fantasy of his pieces but how they were displayed. With this kind of focus on lighting and staging of the piece, viewing became more of an experience than a static action. The sense of awe that his pieces evoked hid the true effect of what these paintings conveyed:

> One cannot stand in front in one of Bierstadt's large paintings without being impressed by another element if his technique—his audacity in painting something so big, and with so much detail, that no one had quite done it in that way before (65).

The appropriation of these cultures became lost on those who became entranced by his paintings. It was no longer about the specific people and details of their lives, but of what the painting could do for their own enjoyment.

This next section will focus on one particular work of Bierstadt that came from an expedition in 1857, where he worked with the Landers Company exploring the Nebraska Territory (Fine 92). He would have competed this work after he returned from the expedition and exhibited years after he had visited the mountains he depicted. *The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak* (Figure 3.) was finished in 1863, and in the couple of years following its completion, it was exhibited and sold. Which again shows, those who had the ability to purchase such works, were those who had the opportunities to frequent institutions.

The canvas that was created for this piece was six foot by ten foot, following the large-scale that most of his paintings were created with. If you think about viewing this piece as it was exhibited, approaching it would have diminished your position as its viewer. Meaning, that the sheer size would have overwhelmed your senses, automatically making you perceive it to be some fantastical creation, comparing your own stature with that of the mountain range presented to you. And when thinking about what it was meant to depict, it would have stimulated your curiosities of this unknown landscape even more. "His large canvases indulge in the rhetoric of grandeur" (Fine 96). It is obvious that he focused on the affect the painting would have had instead of actually focusing on the real details of the location in the image. It was his goal to impress through scale, which proves he painted subjects that would play into the idea of the "uncivilized" West, conforming the people in them to match that.

In this specific work, he included a Native American community that are centered mainly in the bottom center to the bottom right corner of the canvas. The heaviest concentration of figures is in the bottom corner, depicting a settlement next to a body of water. In the settlement there is an array of animals including horses and dogs. Some of the horses are being ridden and some are grazing in the grass field in front and behind the settlement. What is peculiar about

these depictions is that there is no division between the animals and the living space of the humans. They are both occupying the same space, living together in unison, further promoting the "primitive" aspects of this culture. Next to the campfire that occupies the center of the settlement are a group of dead animals spread around gear used to hunt them. Among them is a fox, yak, a couple of birds and deer, and the one that most have huddled around, a large black bear.

It is obvious that Bierstadt was creating the narrative that a group of hunters had just returned from a hunt, with a bountiful collection of food. The settlement has begun to prepare the animals for cooking in the fire that is going, in the fire pit next to them, again reinforcing the savage Native American. This scene is something that is habitual for communities similar to this and without identifying the group depicted, there is no way to distinguish this behavior from other Native Americans. The teepees are concentrated in two separate areas; out in the open next to the body of water and underneath the trees, placed further back in the image. This also depicts them as a nomadic people, which is what ancient peoples from other places in the world were known to be. In this there is no clarifying time of when this scene could have happened, we only know that it was painted during the 1860's, because the artist was alive to claim the time period he was depicting.

Again, going back to the habitual action in the painting, it could also be perceived as a scene of leisure. The figures in the piece are going about their day as if there was no intrusion by the viewer of the piece, or intrusion of those studying and photographing them at the time it would have occurred. It is unlikely that a group of white explorers would have been allowed to document a Native American community they happened to stumble upon, without alarming anyone in the camp. It is in this conclusion that Bierstadt probably altered or added to the

number of figures in the piece to establish more of a narrative for the work overall. As Fine notes, “composed in the studio from multiple sketches of various locations, these panoramas combine elements from different scenes: mountains from on location are placed next to waterfalls from another, which are placed behind plateaus from yet another in order to achieve the maximum sense of awesome perfection” (Fine 97). It is hard to know if the scene depicted actually took place or if it was a manifestation of the artist. When approaching this work, understand that it was created to achieve a sublime effect on its viewer, and not necessarily portray factual events of his expeditions westward.

The rest of the painting is concentrated around the Native scene and it is filled with lush greenery and a body of water that extends into the background of the painting. The trees range from yellow to green and are surrounded by flowers and foliage, instilling in the viewer a sense of paradise (Fine 96). As a whole, Bierstadt would use similar techniques in all of his landscapes to achieve the same goal: a sublime paradise pared with a savage narrative, neatly packaged for the viewer. In *The Rocky Mountains, Lander’s Peak*, the sense of paradise is evoked by the rich colors and looming mountain range in the background of the painting. Here we see the overwhelming quality of the landscape compared the figures used in the foreground. The mountain ranges all diverge in a downward formation concluding at a waterfall flowing into the lake behind the Native American settlement.

The Rocky Mountains are placed far from the foreground and are painted in an ethereal manner, almost appearing unattainable by human modernity or at least by those depicted in the painting. This amount of grandeur reassures the viewer of all the stories they have heard from the West, by presenting them with a “factual” painting plucked straight from the valley of an unknown entity. The mountain no longer presents itself as just that, instead it has become a

physical presence that cannot be ignored and is something that no human life can amount to. The Native Americans are then placed in a space that is hard for Bierstadt's audience to comprehend, furthering their role in the fantasy of the West and its Native American inhabitants.

Albert Bierstadt was able to bring the past, or the perceived past, to the forefront of Euro-American society during the nineteenth century through the use of technological advancements, in order to establish the Native American culture as a dying one, on the verge of extinction. His fantastical and sublime paintings left them to the mercy of nature, further constructing a primitive identity for Native Americans as a whole. His ability to present the West to those living in the East, in the manner that he did prevented his audience from seeing past the fantastical façade of his paintings. In truth, his paintings were not snap shots from the picturesque mountains of the West, but a carefully constructed narratives that would play into the minds of his patrons. This narrative began with his expedition West and ended in the spaces he was to exhibit and sell his works. His narrative was one that was based off of the privilege of being a white Euro-American male, which led him to formulating the objective of documenting the Native American culture before it was to disappear.

EDWARD S. CURTIS

In this final case study, we will be ending the discussion of Albert Bierstadt and his large-scale paintings and transitioning to Edward Curtis and his photographs of Native Americans. In similar theme to the De Bry and Bierstadt depictions we will be looking at "natural" documentation scenes of different Indigenous groups. These images still depict a false portrayal of these groups, and in doing so create a false narrative for non-native people to project onto the Native Americans. Up to this point each case study has contained a different medium than the one that came before it. Keeping with that theme, this study will focus on photography and the use of this technology to appropriate Native American dress and lifestyle. Photography will be looked at as a discourse during his time and how that may have affected the perception of Curtis's photographs. An important aspect of his photos came from the intention that lay behind them. His attitudes towards Native Americans are extremely evident in most of his own writings. They reveal his poor outlook of them as a group and his lack of belief in their survival as a race. It is from this position that his photographs reflected his personal feelings and motivations in documenting the various Native cultures he came into contact with. The concern of the circulation of images of this nature is still a topic that will be discussed in relation to the photographs, just as it has been connected with the two other case studies that come before it.

Curtis had grown up in the time that Bierstadt was exploring the West and working on paintings depicting Native Americans. He had experienced Indigenous removal from their lands, primarily in the eastern half of the United States, and had also grown up in the time immediately after the American Civil War. Curtis was born in the year of 1868 in Whitewater, Wisconsin to a poor family and whose father had just returned back from the war (Nardo 18). Shortly after, his father moved the family to Cordova, Minnesota, where young Curtis grew to love and appreciate

the vast outdoors available to him (Nardo 18), something that would later become evident in his endeavors to explore and to capture the beautiful locations that Native Americans lived on in the West. His father is the one to note as the reason for Curtis's interest in photography. When he was young, he brought home a lens from a stereopticon that he had found while fighting in the Civil War. It wasn't until years later that Curtis had collected enough pieces to construct his own working camera, igniting his passion for photography (Nardo 19).

His father again moved due to financial reasons but this time it was only Curtis who followed him. Years later his mother and siblings followed. They settled in a town within Washington territory, close to the Puget Sound (Vizenor 183). In this location he would now have the freedom to explore this part of the country, where a lot of Indigenous communities were still inhabiting the land around them and where landscapes were quite expansive. While living in Seattle he became financially stable enough to purchase part ownership of a studio, and during the same time he married and started a family (Nardo 20).

At this time, it would be beneficial to discuss how Curtis had been brought up in relation to the atmosphere concerning Native Americans. As a child he was told stories and given books to read on the supposedly atrocious acts committed by Native groups living in Minnesota and Wisconsin during that time. What he concluded from this information was that Native Americans were a savage group of people who killed only white men and took women captive. "He had developed that distorted viewpoint as a child back in Minnesota. In books he had read how bands of fierce Dakota warriors had attacked local white settlers a few years before his birth" (Nardo 22). Don Nardo provides a brief insight into the conflict that was previously mentioned:

> In 1861, the Dakotas in Minnesota were suffering starvation. The harvest had been poor, and there was no game to hunt on the reservation. They were supposed to receive treaty

> money from the US government in exchange for giving up their traditional lands and living on the reservation, but the money had not come. Four young Dakota hunters killed five white settlers on August 17, 1862. They asked their village to protect them from retaliation, and members of the village decided to begin a war to reclaim their land. The Dakota soldiers attacked isolated farms as well as white traders and government officials, with up to 1,000 fighters taking part in the conflict. They killed approximately 200 people and took 285 hostages, but the militia defeated them, and they surrendered on September 23. A military trial sentenced 303 Dakota fighters to death, of whom 38 were executed by hanging (22).

It is important to understand the context of this incident because it represents how Native Americans were being treated and how they were perceived by the general public. They were given an unfair ultimatum, either move or further heighten tensions that could ultimately harm their own people. Their supposed savage nature was in part constructed by previous representations, like the De Bry engravings and Bierstadt paintings. This confirms the notion that this kind of information not only affected the period it was produced in, but the years after it as well.

Books and stories like these were detrimental to the identity of the Native Americans because they were severely one sided. They lacked many details of how these groups were forced from their lands and left to fend for their survival on reservations that didn't contain enough resources to support the amount of people living there. This information not only affected Curtis in his childhood, but he carried with him the images and prejudice that came from stories like this into his adulthood, and ultimately in his work photographing Native Americans. As Vizenor notes, "Curtis announced similar racialist notions that natives were comparable to

children. The notion of natives as immature was a common theory of evolution at the time" (Vizenor 182). Stories like this became all too common for the US, this not only pertained to Curtis's situation and location where he grew up, but stories and beliefs similar to this became popular in places all over the country, creating a divide between white settlers and Indigenous people. This was a way for the government to create a hierarchy within the US, one that benefited white American progress and one that hindered the Native American identity.

It wasn't until Curtis had his first contact with Native Americans living in Washington that he found these stories to carry some sort of falsehood. "These locals were peaceful and friendly, which did not fit the bloodthirsty image Curtis has long held of American Indians" (Nardo 21). The American government had created such a veil for Native Americans to fall under that Curtis had no idea that these Indigenous groups were the opposite of how they had been made out to be. Previous representation of their peoples only contributed to the image of the primitive and savage Native American. Most people didn't have the same experience of meeting the Indigenous groups they had long heard about, so there was no potential for their perception of them to be changed or swayed in anyway. However, I am not saying that this encounter for Curtis completely changed his thinking on American Indians, only that it gave him another perspective on their culture and identity, one that replaced Indigenous threat with their inevitable decline.

Curtis often wrote about his travels and experiences with Native American tribes to pair with his photographs of them. A large amount of his photographs were compiled into a series of books, *The North American Indian*, which he wrote himself. One group that he felt especially compelled to write about was the Cheyenne tribe and in his book, he writes about their origins and movements as a group before white settlers had pushed them from their lands. His recount of

them details their encounters with other tribes, which included stories of their fighting between themselves (Curtis 39). It was in 1851, that they signed a treaty giving the Cheyenne and Arapaho half of the state of Colorado, and parts of Wyoming, Kansas and Nebraska. Their placement was done with the supposed intention of keeping both Indians and settlers safe. However, as an excerpt from Curtis's book shows, the treaty was not held up by the American Government:

> The document which the Indians signed assured to them, in addition to the reserve an annuity of fifty thousand dollars for fifty years. The Senate, without consulting the Indians, curtailed the period to ten years, the president being given the power to extend it to fifteen years if, in his judgement, it should be necessary. Further dissatisfaction was cause by the Government's disregard of the third article of the compact, which bound the nation to protect its wards in the possession of the territory reserved. The fact that the reservation was literally being possessed by settlers, and substantial cities established, shows how well the Government fulfilled its obligations. The friction continued to increase, until in 1857 it appeared necessary to send troops into the field to control the Cheyenne, and then began the era which shows that, excepting the Sioux, no tribe has made a more stubborn resistance against their foredoomed extinction as a primitive people (91).

In just this one paragraph a lot can be unpacked regarding treatment and judgment of Native American tribes by the government and Curtis's language used to describe the situation.

The two previously mentioned groups were told they would be given land and money for their placement into reservations. However, the government took it upon themselves to change the details of the treaty without consulting either of the tribes. Which shows they were not

thought of as equals in their eyes, they were only subject to the actions taken against them with no possible way to negotiate for their people. The government was also responsible for protecting them against settlement by outsiders on the lands given to them, but this was completely disregarded, forcing the Native Americans to fight against this kind of treatment and the backlash they received for protecting their lands. The problem with Curtis really comes from the second half of the paragraph, where he discussed the Government's success in this story and the preeminent extinction that was bound to happen. From his language and explanation of the situation it is apparent that he found the Native Americans to be beneath the settlers in status. The "foredoomed extinction" is what is supposed to take place with Indigenous groups, such as these. Curtis seems indifferent to what these tribes are having to go through almost as if they shouldn't be surprised of their treatment. He makes it out seem as if they were not worthy of the same living standards that white settlers received, because they were classified as a savage and primitive people. These groups are good enough for them to be gazed upon and photographed, but not enough to be given the same rights as the settlers. Curtis reveals how most people looked upon the Native American people at this time, which without a doubt affected how he represented them in his photographs.

At this point in the paper, a look into Curtis's photography practices and photography as a discourse during his time will greatly benefit the understanding of him as a photographer and his intentions behind capturing the Native Americans. Instead of thinking these cultures to be disappearing and on the verge of extinction, he should have thought of them as an evolving culture like any other. As a photographer, he thought it was his duty to document the Native Culture before the opportunity was no longer available (Nardo 10). He was looking to how these cultures used to live and thrive off of the land they occupied and continued to focus on what

inherently made them “Indian” (Nardo 13). He ignored the realities that these cultures ultimately had to face if they wanted to survive the threat of white American settlers. The fantasy of the American Indian that had been created years before Curtis was born, was still in effect, resulting in his and others’ fascination and obsession with depicting Native Americans in their supposedly truest form. He furthered this fantasy by using enhanced scenery and dress so that Native Americans, appeared as authentic as possible (Nardo 13). In this comes the problem of truth or the lack there of within his photographs. The fact that most if not all of his photographs were staged and presented in a way to show the “authentic” American Indian in proper ceremonial dress, headpieces, and war paint and not how he came upon them, reveals the fantasy that Native Americans were a part of for white settlers. If they weren’t in these traditional costumes, posed riding a horse, or performing some kind of dance, then their importance as a group of people was lost, at least as far as white Americans were concerned.

He also found many Indigenous groups didn’t like the idea of being photographed by a white intruder. One peculiar encounter during the beginning of his time as a photographer came in 1895, while he was still living in Seattle. He came across and elderly woman, Kikisoblu, belonging to the Duwamish tribe, but she was known by the rest of the white settlers in town as Princess Angeline. For Curtis, this was his first time photographing a Native American in his career. However, he was met with opposition until he offered her money, which she later accepted (Nardo 22). Even after moving past the fact that he had to pay her in order for him to take her photo, his instructions for her to follow while in his studio are even more strange:

> Curtis led Kikisoblu from the beach to his studio in Seattle. Once inside, she started to loosen her colorful bandana and scarf. But he stopped her. Clearly, he felt she looked more like an “authentic” American Indian when in her usual attire. This was the first of

> many instances in which he posed or provided costumes so his subjects would seem more "Indian" to him (Nardo 23).

This instance shows the lack of disregard for how she wanted to be photographed. He also prevented her from posing or wearing what she wanted in the photo, only taking into consideration what would make the most appealing photograph. "Curtis paid natives to pose and dance in several simulated ceremonies, but he may not have understood native resistance or the actual tricky scenes he captured" (Vizenor 186). Paying his subjects seems to be a running theme through his career and his "simulated" scenes discredit any truth that was present in his photographs. However, at the same time, payment was received as a sign of respect, which complicates the situation when thinking through his intentions behind taking the photos.

A similar instance comes from the time he travelled to Alaska in 1899 on the Harriman Alaskan Expedition. Here the Indians he had hoped to photograph resented any white man coming onto their lands, largely due to the fact that settlers before them had destroyed most of the resources they lived off or had taken over their means of survival, such as fishing on the coast (Nardo 34). He found that when he went to take a photo most turned their backs to the camera or showed no expression on their faces. What is more disturbing is when he knew that the people, he encountered didn't want him photographing them and yet still proceeded to do it without their permission (Nardo 36). Though these are only two instances out of the many that could be found within his career, they both explicitly reveal Curtis's indifference for how Native Americans thought of him, an outsider invading their lands. As a white privileged man, he believed himself to have to right in photographing these cultures whether he had permission or not. From the discussion of his earlier writings it is clear that he perceived their time to be

coming to an end and no matter the resistance it was his duty to document them before it was too late.

The nineteenth century had seen the invention of photography and during the late nineteenth century was beginning to extend past its scientific designation, with the invention of the stereograph along with other variations of the camera (Silverman 730). Photography was no longer exclusive to those who were in disciplines connected to its use. Luckily, Curtis grew up during a time where the camera had already been made available to its many patrons.

> The early, 1850's, however, saw a major turning point with the introduction of new, cheaper and faster processes which opened up photography to commercialization on a vast scale, removing the medium from the exclusive preserve of scientists and specialists and ensuring its popularity (Green 91).

Being that Curtis was born in 1868, he was given the means to explore photography as a career, especially in a location that had an ample number of subjects to be photographed. Though, photography had been popular in the years before his birth, it was continued to grow with similar intentions used by the scientists in the years before.

It is important to understand that with this invention, photography presented a new way of looking at the world. Representations of places and people, familiar and unknown, had become the expected subject for photographers (Green 92). These photos were used to create a new narrative for current and past histories, providing those circulating these photographs the position to inform the public with whatever depictions they deemed appropriate to do so. For this study, the popularization of photographing places and people that were unfamiliar, was what allowed Curtis to explore places in the West, Alaska, and Canada without adverse reaction. His

actions were not something that were perceived as imaginative or defiant, instead they were believed to be a part of his profession. As Green notes, "to photograph these monuments was in a sense to preserve them from further disintegration—to render them immortal, as Lacan put it" (Green 93). Curtis traveled to a lot of these places with the intention on documenting them because he perceived them to be a disintegrating culture. However, in the midst of this process, he created a fantasy for the Native Americans he photographed. Paring them with fantastical surroundings and traditional clothing and at the same time portraying them still as primitive culture, just as earlier explorers of the New World had done in their documentation of Native Americans.

Curtis was able to produce such images because of the type of camera he used, one that allowed him to enhance both the figures and landscapes in his photos:

> The chief instrument he employed for this task was a view camera, a device invented in the 1850s, it has two principal parts. The front section contained the lens and a hand-operated shutter to snap the individual pictures. Meanwhile, the rear section housed a holder for large pieces of glass. When the operator lined up a shot, the lens in front projected the image onto the glass in the back. There, the photographer moved the lens-holder forward or backward slightly to achieve a sharp focus. He then replaced the glass with a sheet of slide film. Finally, he snapped the shutter, thereby creating a negative, which he would later use to make positive prints (Nardo 30).

The view camera was seen to be able to accurately record what the photographer was documenting and also provide a solution to distortions, creating a more natural effect (Mang 227). Since this camera had been invented in the mid-nineteenth century, Curtis was using a technology that was outdated. His decision to use the view camera mirrored the way he strived to

depict Native Americans, in the past and in decline. Nature and the natural became important aspects of these photos, without them there is a lack of connection between the people in the photos and those viewing them. The idea that the camera could capture the essence of nature, developed from the idea that the camera was a tool for communication, education, and art (Silverman 738).

One piece of technology that completely opened up the field of photography was the invention of the Kodak camera. George Eastman, who was considered to be an amateur photographer, found the traditional equipment for photography to be burdensome (La Farge 477). In 1888, he created a camera that was hand held, used film on a built-in roll, and cut exposure time immensely (La Farge 477). With this development amateur photographers were able to produce their own photographs at a rate better than traditional conventions. This meant that images were being produced, in a way that had never been seen before. A need for professional photographers to distinguish their work from amateurs arose from this. Curtis' choice to use the view camera seems to come from his attempt to distinguish himself from other photographers. His camera was supposedly more authentic to the process of photography, just as his images of the Natives were to their culture.

Understanding that what exists in these photos are innately natural conflicts with the notion that the photographer had the ability to alter the people in the photograph and the photograph itself. For people to understand that nature is intertwined with the meaning of the photos makes it clear as to why Curtis's photographs were believed to depict the Native Americans truthfully. The camera came to be understood as an inanimate object operated by the photographer, with the ability to use the human eyes to portray the photographic truth (Silverman 741). As Silverman notes, "optically both survey the same scene, sharing the camera's lens"

(Silverman 742). Ultimately, the camera and the photographer are seen to operate as one, both with the ability to share the human experience with the ultimate level of truth. Curtis and his camera worked together with the idea that the camera could portray his experience as a photographer and as regular frequenter with Native Americans. This provided his audience with the narrative of his adventures as he saw and experienced them.

The photograph's popularity not only relied on what was depicted within the photograph but also by who was operating the camera.

> The analogy between the eye and the camera owed much of its power to the notion that the divinely constructed human form offered the model for the most efficient application of physical principles. The eye was the natural theologian's favorite illustration of the perfection of God's design, and the specifications of nature—delineated in the human frame—dictated the standard for truthful representation (Silverman 742).

As we have discussed in the previous case studies, most white Europeans believed themselves to be above the other races they came into contact with (Greenblatt 9). Curtis's photographs pitted the white privileged man against the primitive and savage Native American, continuing to add to the hierarchy created by European Christian explorers of the New World. As Greenblatt explains, "the sources of this sense of superiority are sometimes difficult to specify, though the Christians' conviction that they possessed an absolute and exclusive religious truth must have played a major part in virtually all of their encounters" (Greenblatt 9). It is in this belief that makes it easy for Curtis to display power over the Native Americans. In his duty to document them before they were to go extinct, we see the ideology that is the white Euro-American male. He was convinced that it was in his power to photograph this dying culture, revealing the savior position he took when interacting with the different groups he came across in his expeditions.

After recognizing that Curtis did everything in his power to instill in his photograph's authentic Native American experiences, his truth is far from reality. Using props and dressing his subjects so they carry with them the white idea of Native American tradition does not mean that his photos represent their true experience, instead his depiction of their nature became his audience's embrace of their fantasy. "It delineated both the human standard of accurate representation and the potential technology to improve or distort the perception of nature" (Silverman 756). However, this distortion is what created and affected the Native American identity, especially for those who hadn't been able to come into contact with them on their own. I argue that when viewing Curtis's photos, a skeptical mentality is the one that needs to be applied to their analysis. It is important to understand that Curtis's photos attributed to a narrative that heavily affected Native Americans. Their treatment was caused by the belief that they were not worthy of the equal living standards as the white Euro-Americans who had also stolen their lands. A belief that was developed from the information provided by artists such as Curtis.

For this case study we are going to look at a widely known image from Edward Curtis, one that reveals how he wanted Native Americans to look in his photos and one that shows his ability to remove any modernity of the time it was taken. *An Oasis in the Badlands* (Figure 4.) was published in 1905 along with a description of Red Hawk (the subject of the photograph) and his life, in Curtis's *The North American Indian*. When first looking at the photo we see a centralized figure mounted on top of a horse that is drinking from a pool of water, that is in the middle of a deserted landscape. The horse stands amongst tall blades of grass that extend into the background of the photo, all the way to a mountain range that is seen off in the distance.

There is no inclusion of any other person or animal in the photo, leading you to solely focus on the man sitting atop the white horse. In Curtis's process, "he removed parasols,

suspenders, wagons, the actual traces of modernism and material culture in his pictures of natives" (Vizenor 186). With this kind of practice, he prevented the viewer from establishing when the photo could have been taken. There are no clues of what that location consisted of and the development of the area around it. The lack of modernity allowed for Curtis to place Native American culture in the stagnate context, which depicted them as a group failing to keep up with the American progressive ideology.

The background is quite blurred, with only the foreground of the photo in focus. The landscape surrounding the two figures is very calm, with only a slight breeze blowing the flowers and tall grass beside the pond, which the horse is drinking from. It is quite apparent that the figure is dressed in traditional clothing, with a large feathered headdress that is typically used in ceremonial situations, and his entire body seems to be clothed or covered by some kind of garment. He looks like he is ready for some kind of ceremony or looming battle. The figure is also looking off into the distance, from the photo it is impossible to know what he is looking at. Whether it is an impending battle, or he is just taking in the peaceful view, is unclear. He has also let go of the reigns to his horse, releasing the control he has over the animal, nearly mimicking the position that Native Americans were now in with the American government. Since most Native American groups had been moved to reservations, they were now reliant on the government's promises to sustain and provide resources to them, completely giving up power to their own survival.

Red Hawk who was an Oglala warrior, was known for leading war parties against Crazy Horse, the Shoshoni, and the Lakota (Curtis 188). In his life he, "engaged in twenty battles, many with troops, among them the Custer fight of 1876; others with Pawnee, Apsaroke, Shoshoni, Cheyenne, and even the Sioux scouts" (Curtis 188). He was widely known to be a

fierce warrior, something that Curtis was well aware of, so then comes the question, why decide to depict Red Hawk in such a serene and peaceful scenario? Was it to change the public's perception of Native American warriors? Or was it because at the time the picture was taken there weren't any current battles, like the ones he was known for? Or was what most would have come to believe during the time it was published, where it would have been an opportune moment of Red Hawk that Curtis happened to come across?

To find an answer, I find it appropriate to revisit how he staged some of his photos in the past. We know his intentions were to document Native Americans before they were to be extinct, so when looking at a picture like *An Oasis in the Badlands* we see a lonely figure stuck in the past, almost looking at a future that he is not to be a part of. It is unlikely that Red Hawk would be wearing this traditional dress without some kind of reason. One that was for a special event or ceremony and one that Curtis would not be invited to attend, unless he used money to bribe his way into it (Vizenor 186). Which we know was a habit of his, even when the Native community he was photographing resisted his presence. So, when looking at this particular photograph, it did not come from a moment that Curtis was lucky enough to find on his journeys in the West. It was likely that Curtis convinced or paid Red Hawk to pose on his horse and in traditional clothing, to resemble a past that Red Hawk was a part of and one that was currently deteriorating. Curtis had a drive to photograph the culture as it had been, and with that falsely created scenarios that would depict the Native Americans as they were and not how they had come to be during his time.

When looking at various representations of Native Americans, Edward Curtis's photographs have come to be some of the most well-known and expressive of their culture. However, as we have seen throughout this case study, that notion isn't necessarily the correct

one. As a photographer, the images he produced were supposed to hold a certain level of truth for those he documented. His experiences with native communities were supposed to come across in his photographs, and in a way they did, but not without the careful manipulation of each scenario presented. He was fully aware that the experiences he was presenting in his photographs were not the ones that Native Americans were currently experiencing, especially given his knowledge of the American government's involvement of Native American reservations. Curtis failed to present truthful documentation of the many groups he came into contact with and instead used photography in a way that fantasized Native Americans, to the point that people believed extinction was in their near future.

CONCLUSION

Part of the problem in one culture's appropriation of another comes from the inability to understand the experience of the other culture, resulting in the confusion of meaning between ideologies of the one appropriating and that of the people in question. In subject appropriation specifically, the artists have used his or her privilege to inform others of the "insiders" of that particular culture. In this they confuse their own ability to present information about this culture without any bias, instead representing them through their own perception of that cultures experience. Values and traditions become affected when your understanding of a culture is confused with your own beliefs and knowledge. Appropriative representations construct identities based on an outsider's knowledge of another cultures' manner of living. When such outsiders spread information to an audience of their own origin, interpretation of the inside culture is then obstructed by that society's individual history, current and past.

In all three case studies there is evidence of the colonial gaze as an inhibitor to Indigenous cultural expression. Most of what has come to be known of these cultures, came from Euro-American depictions of Native culture. Technologies of the sixteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provided the platform for artists to successfully depict and distribute their images to audiences in Europe and the United States. These cultures were no longer their own construct, but in the eyes of Euro-Americans, were objects for explorers and colonizers to control. Unfortunately, the narrative that gets produced often takes on the ideas presented in the portrayal of that culture, especially when a group who has the perceived power over the other are the ones to disseminate that information. There is no control given to the inside culture to decide for themselves, the nature of the images or how they are perceived by the artists audience. Their role is to play the part that is given to them by their intruders. The artists discussed in this paper

have portrayed in their work, stereotypes that have resulted in the degradation of the Native American identity. Their portrayed primitive nature, spread throughout Europe and the Americas, prevented an original cultural impression from forming. Outsiders believed, cultures beneath European progress were innately primitive or savage, and so were projected as that in their art. Each of the artists were given power to document this culture because of their origin and privilege as white males. Their representations came from knowledge that was clouded by their own past and prejudices of Native Americans. In this, representations of Native American culture, reflect the artist and his experience rather than that of the true Native American identity.

From my research, I have found that this project could have been realized in many different ways. For one, there were many other artists who appropriated Native American culture in their work and could have fit well into the discussion of this paper. There were also other examples for Theodore De Bry, Albert Bierstadt, and Edward S. Curtis that could have been used to support my argument. However, for the purpose of this paper one example from each was enough to provide sufficient information on the artist and his practices. Another area that would have been interesting to explore would have been art works that Native Americans produced themselves, specifically work that depicted their own culture. It would have made for an interesting comparison between Native American and Euro-American work. There is also the possibility of approaching this subject through contemporary artists. Paintings like Kent Monkman's present interesting dynamics of stereotypes Native Americans have come to be known by and confront past histories of appropriation of Native culture.

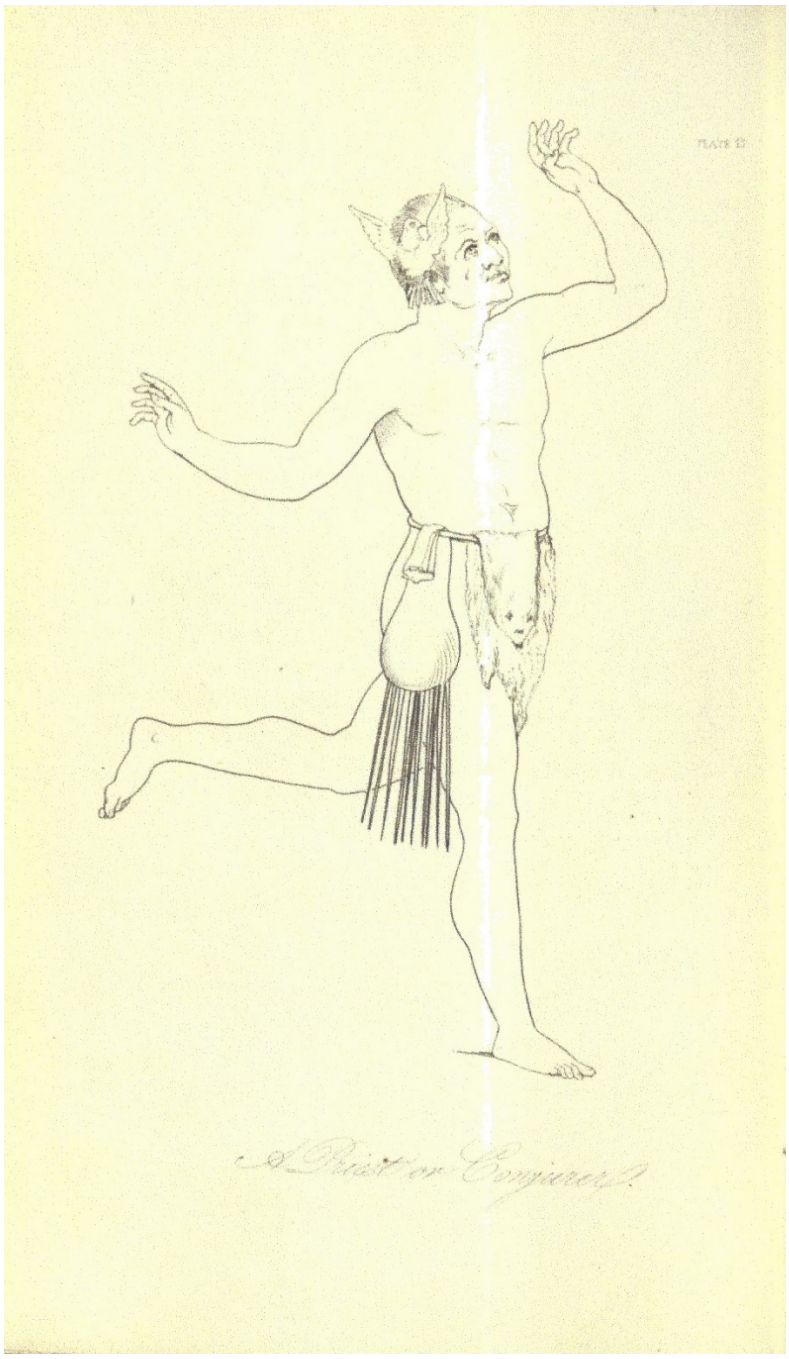

Figure 1.

A Priest or Conjurer

John White

1585-1588

Figure 2.

Native American Conjurer

Theodore De Bry

1590

Figure 3.

The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak

Albert Bierstadt

1863

Figure 4.

An Oasis in the Badlands

Edward S. Curtis

1905

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